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## **BELMONT STAKES WINNER ESSENTIAL QUALITY SET FOR RETURN TO CHURCHILL DOWNS MONDAY**

**LOUISVILLE, KY (Sunday, June 6, 2021)** – Louisville-native trainer **Brad Cox** recorded arguably the biggest win in his young career Saturday when **Godolphin's** champion colt **Essential Quality** conquered the third jewel of the Triple Crown – the \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes (Grade I). The **Tapit** colt is scheduled to return to his home stall at Churchill Downs' Barn 22 Monday afternoon.

"We're so thrilled for this horse," Cox said. "He showed why he's a champion. A lot of people have worked very hard to get this victory and we are so thankful.

"With Tapit on the top side of his pedigree, we really thought he would get the mile-and-a-half when given the opportunity. We always thought he had the ability. After the Derby, you just have to see what it takes out of them. It's a demanding race as well as the Belmont. We were watching him for a week or so. We put our heads together and felt like if we were going to keep him in training we might as well run him. I really don't think I could keep his feet on the ground the next couple of months without keeping him on some type of breeze schedule. He's a very smart horse. He has a lot of energy but he lets you know when he's ready to run."

Essential Quality remained in New York on Sunday with several of his Kentucky-based stablemates. They are scheduled to van about 14 hours to Louisville at 2 a.m. Monday.

Essential Quality improved his record to six wins from just seven starts with robust purse earnings of \$3,215,144.

Prior to the Belmont Stakes, Essential Quality was the 5-2 post time favorite in the \$3 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI) where he crossed the wire fourth behind **Medina Spirit**, **Mandaloun** and **Hot Rod Charlie**.

Mandaloun, a stablemate to Essential Quality, worked five furlongs in :59.40 early Sunday morning at Churchill Downs with jockey **Florent Geroux** aboard. Owned by **Juddmonte**, Mandaloun is scheduled to run in next Sunday's \$150,000 Pegasus at Monmouth as a prep to the \$1 million Haskell (GI) on July 17.

**JULIET FOXTROT (GB) RECORDS FINAL WORK PRIOR TO SATURDAY'S OLD FORESTER MINT JULEP** – **Juddmonte's** Grade I winner **Juliet Foxtrot (GB)** recorded her final half-mile work in :49.20 Sunday morning at Churchill Downs prior to being the likely headliner in Saturday's 45<sup>th</sup> running of the \$150,000 Old Forester Mint Julep (Grade III).

The six-time winning daughter of **Dansili (GB)** worked on the turf with exercise rider **Edvin Vargas** in the saddle. Juliet Foxtrot most recently bested five rivals by two lengths in the \$300,000 Jenny Wiley (GI) at Keeneland. She finished sixth in Mint Julep last year.

Entries for Saturday's 11-race program will take place Wednesday.

Saturday is Downs After Dark – Rock the Downs presented by Budweiser. The evening of racing will get underway at 6 p.m. and feature entertainment from **Rock United** on the Plaza Stage. Fans are invited to break out their best rocker wear with vintage band T's, leather jackets, denim, plaid or even glam. Make a statement or come as you are to rock the downs.

For more information, visit [www.churchilldowns.com](http://www.churchilldowns.com).

**DOWN THE STRETCH** – Racing continued Sunday with a first post of 12:45 p.m. The nine-race card had a \$15,297 carryover in the 20-cent Derby City 6 (Races 4-9). ... Jockey **Florent Geroux** will serve a three-day suspension starting Sunday. He's scheduled to resume riding Saturday at Churchill Downs and slated to ride at Monmouth Park on Sunday. ... Jockey **Mitchell Murrill** has won five of his last six mounts for trainer **Chris Hartman** including three victories on Saturday's card. ... Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen** began Sunday 81 wins behind all-time leader **Dale Baird**, 9,445 victories to 9,364. Asmussen has won 235 races this year and is on pace to surpass Baird this summer. ... After dark days on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, racing at Churchill Downs will continue Thursday with a first post of 5 p.m. for Twilight Thursday presented by Blue Moon. The eight-race card features \$1 Blue Moon and domestic draft beer, live entertainment from **Maestro J** and local food trucks.

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